
DPNR is to blame for failing to regulate pesticides – despite receiving federal funds

Pesticide applicators in the USVI are under extra pressure since the methyl bromide incident on St. John, both from both their regulator, the V.I. Department of Planning and Natural Resources and from their clients.

There is greater expectation for each applicator to have adequate training and certification.

However, pesticide certification training is no longer being offered in the St. Thomas/St. John district.

Re-certification is no longer being offered anywhere in the USVI. The last course offered in St. Thomas was last May.

DPNR has received \$77,000 over the last three years from the federal EPA, which DPNR is required to forward to UVI's Pesticide Safety Education Program to provide the courses.

DPNR has received all of those funds but forwarded \$0 — nothing — to the Pesticide Safety Education Program in the St. Thomas-St. John district.

Further, DPNR is under probation by EPA for failure to forward those and other required funds. I know this because I direct the Pesticide Safety Education Program in the USVI. For two years, UVI covered my travel expenses to St. Thomas to provide the courses, but the university stopped that until DPNR reimbursed.

Courses still are being offered on St. Croix, where I live and don't require travel expenses.

This failure spans three years and

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two administrations. I place the blame solely on the sitting and previous DPNR commissioners and the governors for not correcting the problem.

— Joe Williamson, Ph. D., is an entomologist at the University of the Virgin Islands and director of the V.I. Pesticide Safety Education Program